**How to Be a Positive Parent.**

**The 2-Minute Action Plan for Fine Parents**

Pull out a sheet of paper or start a new note on your phone.

List the abilities and qualities you hope your children will have by the time they are eighteen.

Back track from that point and begin thinking of chores and responsibilities you can give your children now which will help them attain those abilities and qualities before they leave home.

Instead of thinking in terms of what they can’t do, begin to see them as the capable human beings they are and discover what they can do.

**The Ongoing Action Plan for Fine Parents**

Be intentional about promoting your children’s independence. Look for teachable moments.

When the food arrives and there’s unwanted mayonnaise on your son’s cheeseburger, let him explain the problem to the waiter (or eat the burger as is!). If your daughter is unhappy about a grade or an assignment, let her talk to the teacher about it before you become involved. Learning to speak up for yourself is a critical life skill. Children can begin learning this skill as soon as they can talk.

[A sense of gratitude is directly related to happiness](http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier). Intentionally [cultivate gratitude](https://afineparent.com/happiness/attitude-of-gratitude.html) by commenting frequently on your own and your child’s blessings. Model saying thank you and giving thank you gifts. Instead of writing the end-of-year thank you note, have your child do it. If he is too young, have him dictate to you what to say in a note to accompany a picture he has drawn.

Think through the responsibilities your children have in your home now. Is your 11-year-old still doing the same jobs she had when she was eight? Determine if your children are capable of doing more and set the bar high.

Talk to them about why they are being given new responsibilities- *They are important contributors to your home. They are more mature now. They need these skills for the day when they have their own homes*. Help them see beyond the grind of clearing their dishes or hanging up their towels and relate it to the future when they have roommates, bosses, even children of their own.

When a household problem occurs – a toilet overflowing, a broken glass vase, the cable is out, the food processor blows the circuit – involve your children in the solution. Maybe they’re too young to handle broken glass, but you can talk to them about the importance of finding every shard so that no one gets hurt and teach them the trick of shining a flashlight on the surface to spot fragments you might have missed. Show them where the circuit breaker box is and how you can tell if a circuit has flipped. Allow them to be part of the solution.

Here’s the bottom line for all of us fine parents**: If we are intentional in our parenting, our kids have a better shot at growing up confident in their own ability to take care of themselves. Isn’t that what we really want for them?**